

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Girdwood Volunteer Fire Department****Federal Tax ID: 92-0164627****Project Title:**

Girdwood Volunteer Fire Department - Girdwood Water Tender 41

State Funding Requested: \$ 440,000**House District: 32 - P**

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Replacement of a prehistoric water tender for basic fire protection in a community with well based homes.

Funding Plan:**Total Cost of Project: \$440,000**

	<u>Funding Secured</u>		<u>Other Pending Requests</u>		<u>Anticipated Future Need</u>	
	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>
Local Funds	\$45,000	09 local match				
Total	\$45,000					

Explanation of Other Funds:

Girdwood has applied to the US Fire Administration for assistance annually since 2002 to replace this tender without success.

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

The Girdwood Fire Department is seeking to replace an aging, obsolete 28 year old water tender that has become unsafe and unserviceable due to heavy use in a rural environment. The 1970's era water tender is non-compliant with federal standards and is strongly recommended for retirement by the AFD. This tender is vital for basic fire protection in a community with a large area of well based homes. Currently the AFD is unable to find parts for the aging tender and proper maintenance of the existing tender is no longer possible. Purchase of a new Water Tender/Pumper apparatus that will provide for water supply operations at both structural and wildland fires and be able to act independently as a wildland interface engine.

Project Timeline:

July 2008

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Girdwood Volunteer Fire Dept

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Contact Name: Chief Chadwick

Phone Number: 783-2511

Address:

Email:

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No



Girdwood Volunteer Fire Department

P.O. Box 915 Girdwood, Alaska 99587 Phone 783-2511 Fax 783-3122 E-Mail: fire@girdwoodfire.com
A non-profit corporation Tax ID 92-0164627

Project Description

The Girdwood Fire Department is seeking to replace an aging, obsolete 28 year old water tender that has become unsafe and unserviceable due to heavy use in our rural environment.

Goal of this proposal:

Our objective is to increase the safety of our responding fire fighters while protecting the critical infrastructure of Girdwood and the surrounding area, especially in areas without fire Hydrants. In addition, we would reduce the possibility of a catastrophic wildland interface fire in our community. Our plan is to purchase a new Water Tender/Pumper apparatus that will provide for water supply operations at both structural and wildland fires and be able to act independently as a wildland interface engine.

By replacing the current unsafe, obsolete apparatus, we hope to be able to respond safely and more quickly with additional resources. Our goal is to place a crew of 4 firefighters, 2500 gallons of water, a pump, drafting equipment, and foam to assist with water supply at firefighting operations within the fire district and surrounding area, as well as provide mutual aid to contiguous departments. This vehicle upgrade would also improve interoperability with apparatus and equipment at the Whittier Vehicle/Train tunnel where this apparatus is a critical component in water supply operations.

Cost:

As with any apparatus designed for use in Alaska, some non standard design issues exist that directly impact the vehicles ability to operate in the rural Alaskan environment. This is reflected in the above average cost of this apparatus in relation to similar apparatus designed for use in the lower 48 states. The projected cost of this apparatus is \$450,000.00. The Girdwood Fire Department will match any funds received from the State at 10% (\$45,000.00) to reflect the community's need for this apparatus.

Financial Need:

The Girdwood Fire Department is funded solely on the tax revenue levied only on private property owners in our service district. Our fire service area has a limited population and tax base out of proportion to the size and value of our response area. Our service district is notable for the large number of federally and state owned facilities and land that generate zero tax revenue. Less than 5% of the land is privately owned and subject to taxation.

Our current budget is \$490,000 per year, most of which goes to personnel costs, equipment maintenance, and training, leaving very little for capitol projects. Funding this apparatus to protect assets from which we receive no fire protection revenue is impossible with our small budget and yet, federal and state agencies count on us to be the first responders to any fire related incident involving their lands and facilities. This acts as an unfunded mandate where an unfair burden is placed upon our small community to fund fire protection for large federal and state facilities and thousands of acres of forests.

We have applied to the United States Fire Administration for assistance under the "assistance to Firefighters Grant Program" annually since 2002 to replace this apparatus without success.

Our Board of Supervisors has agreed to over match this funding request at 10% of the project cost, however, they are unwilling to fund the full amount as this apparatus will be used primarily to protect critical Federal and State infrastructure from which we derive no tax revenue.

Needs Assessment:

The Girdwood Fire Department currently consists of one (1) station, six (6) pieces of apparatus, and 46 active volunteer personnel. This District contains nearly 10,000 potential home sites, of which 1500 are currently occupied, with explosive development and growth occurring on a yearly basis. Less than one half of the home sites are supplied with hydrants.

Our current water supply apparatus is over 28 years old. The apparatus to be replaced has a dangerously corroded steel water tank, an under-powered diesel motor and a transmission with inadequate gear ratios for the Alaskan mountains. The old vehicles top speed of 50mph is inadequate for timely responses outside the Girdwood Valley. The pump leaks badly and failed its annual service test for four years in a row. This vehicle fails to meet NFPA, DOT, and OSHA regulations (It still has a tailboard to ride on!). An identical vehicle, retired from service three years ago was involved in a major accident while in service with Anchorage involving complete brake failure.

This vehicle required significant maintenance work this past year, primarily with the brakes, all wheel drive and electrical systems. We have investigated refurbishing this vehicle and have been stymied by the fact that even then it would be too heavy to meet DOT requirements for a single axel truck. In addition, critical parts are obsolete or not available. Our current Wildland firefighting vehicle consists of a pickup truck with a small 250gpm pump and a 200 gallon water tank. We store additional wildland firefighting equipment on our existing apparatus during wildfire season.

We are requesting funds to help purchase an all wheel drive wildland / urban interface water supply apparatus (Tender) to replace this vehicle.

Current Fire Protection Problem:

The entire Girdwood Fire District exists in a wildland urban interface. Wildfires occur with increasing frequency and intensity every year in Alaska. The vegetation is abundant and flammable. The recent spruce bark beetle infestation has killed 20-30 percent of the living trees, leaving stands of extremely flammable dead spruce trees and brush. Explosive population growth in this interface area has created a fire protection challenge that increases in complexity annually.

In addition to the potential catastrophic losses within this District, a fire started in this area could threaten thousands of square miles of the Chugach National Forest, Chugach State Park, State and Municipal lands. Depending on the weather and other fire activity in the state, dedicated wildland firefighting crews can be several hours away.

Critical infrastructure that will benefit from this project:

The Girdwood Fire Department covers 172 square miles of Municipal, State and Federal land with a population of 2750 residents that also encompasses many thousands of acres of irreplaceable, environmentally sensitive wilderness areas that are home to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Girdwood receives about 400 calls a year for Fire, Rescue and EMS services.

The Girdwood Fire Department is the first responder to any incident involving the transportation corridor that contains the Alaska Railroad, the Seward Highway and the Enstar gas transmission pipeline. This corridor also contains the Anton Anderson Memorial combination car and train tunnel serving the strategically critical deep water port at Whittier. The tunnel, at two and a half miles long is the longest combination tunnel in the United States.

Girdwood's infrastructure includes residences, schools, day care centers, churches, restaurants, stores and the Alyeska ski resort that includes a major five star hotel that routinely hosts international events that in the past has included the Special Olympics, the Arctic Winter Games, National Governors Conference, and frequently serves as a site for diplomatic meetings that include international leaders and heads of state.



We serve the US Forest Service Portage Visitor center that records 200 thousand visitors a year, two State DOT maintenance and operations facilities, two railroad stations, a strip mall, a water and wastewater treatment plant, as well as four electrical substations. We also offer mutual aid to the Anchorage Fire Department as well as the adjacent fire departments in Whittier, Hope and Cooper Landing. Girdwood's service area is located in the major seismic zone famous for the 1964 9.2 earthquake.



Summary

The Girdwood Fire Department is dedicated to providing service to the community in a safe and effective manner. It is unacceptable to risk the lives of our firefighters by having them respond on an obsolete and unsafe apparatus. It is also unacceptable to expect that our small community should shoulder the financial burden of protecting so much in the way of federal and State facilities and land without help.

With this apparatus we will be able to provide the needed response time, water, and equipment so that small fires can be intercepted earlier and the possibility of spread can be significantly reduced. By catching fires earlier, we will save lives and property with a minimum of danger to our firefighters. Thank you for helping protect our firefighters and our community.



New Girdwood Water Tender Specifications

2 door cab W/SCBA seat
2500 Gallon Water Tank
All wheel Drive
530 Hp Detroit Diesel series 60 engine
1500 gpm pump (Waterous) with monarch intake valve
Auto pressure governor
Side mount pump panel
Auto Tire Chains
Fold-a-tank storage
35 foot Ladder with Rack
Front mount suction
Large diameter tank fill
20 feet of suction hose
Rear dump chute
Dump chute on each side (rear)
Hose bed capacity:

- 1000 ft 5 inch
- 600 ft 3 inch
- 2ea. 200ft 1&3/4inch crosslay/speedlays

Rear 5inch stortz discharge
Standard instrument panel to include pyrometer and outside air temp gauge
Front tow hooks
Air compressor (brake)/charger
Warning lights per NFPA 1901 with code 3 traffic directing lights
Scene lights
Sigtronics Intercom – driver, pump panel, back up
Compartments to fit Wildland interface gear.



Girdwood Volunteer Fire Department

P.O. Box 915 Girdwood, Alaska 99587 Phone 783-2511 Fax 783-3122 E-Mail fire@girdwoodfire.com

Dear Representative Young,

I just attended the 2007 (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grants Workshop given to the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association at our spring conference in Juneau.

I was very disappointed to hear that among the significant program changes, the 2007 Assistance to Firefighters Grant awards will be heavily weighted toward departments with large populations and high call volumes. This effectively eliminates the rural, volunteer departments in Alaska who can least afford to acquire equipment and programs, and yet in many cases have the most need. A case in point is the recent fire in Hooper Bay that caused 35 million dollars damage and left 30 people homeless.

If you have not been following the numbers, fire departments in the State of Alaska have only received 2 awards from the 2006 AFG process (Total \$177,000.00) from a program with a fiscal note of over 500 million dollars. Our per capita fire loss and death rate is among the highest in the nation. (In bush Alaska, the death rate from fires is 300% of the national average). The goals of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program were laudable when first passed, but in my eyes it has turned into a massive pork program for large urban departments. Without any changes, I strongly urge you not to fund or support this program in the future.

Thank You

William Chadwick
Fire Chief
Girdwood Fire Department
783-2511
783-3122 (fax)
chief@girdwoodfire.com